

# Idaho Department of Fish and Game

## Enforcement Annual Report 2006



# CONSERVATION ENFORCEMENT CREED

The Commission has established as policy that, relative to the enforcement of fish and game laws, rules, and proclamations, the official philosophy, guideline and creed of Department personnel shall always be:

- ♦ To assist the public in their compliance with regulations;
- ♦ To save unfortunate offenders from unnecessary humiliation, inconvenience and distress;
- ♦ To have no compromise for crime and to resolutely seek the violator, but with judgment charitable toward the minor offender;
- ♦ Never to cite if a warning would be better;
- ♦ Never to scold or reprimand, but rather to respect and inform.

Please establish this policy firmly in your mind and use it as a guide in your enforcement activities.





## Idaho Department of Fish and Game Enforcement Bureau Annual Report 2006

Idaho's rich fish and wildlife legacy will continue for generations due in part to the dedication of her 104 conservation officers. For all of us, the responsibility of protecting and perpetuating our fish and wildlife is more than a job— it's a lifestyle.

This lifestyle began in 1889 when the Department was first created and the first game warden was hired. Then as now, game wardens and later conservation officers worked tirelessly, night and day, seven days a week, every week, protecting wildlife from poachers, or those who would rather steal from sportsmen.

There have been many changes and advances in conservation law enforcement since 1889. In this first edition of the Enforcement Bureau's annual report, you will read about some exciting adventures that have occurred over the last year. However, the basic skills and resources used today were developed by game wardens and conservation officers like



Wendell Twitchell and others who have gone before us. They are the ones who developed the lifestyle that so many of us are drawn to.

So, it is to them that this first annual report is dedicated. To all the retired conservation officers out there; thank you for your part in perpetuating the legacy.

Jon Heggen  
Enforcement Chief



## Recruitment

During the past five years, IDFG has hired over 40 conservation officers. That is nearly half of the field staff statewide! The Baby Boomer generation has begun to retire and future forecasts suggest we will see a need to recruit and train an average of 3-5 conservation officers annually.

Idaho is not alone in this recruiting crisis. The law enforcement chiefs of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies have taken on recruitment and retention of officers as a priority action item.

Veteran Idaho conservation officers have been returning to their colleges and universities on recruiting missions, talking to student wildlife organizations and classes about careers as conservation officers. We have begun to see some of the fruits of their efforts as more candidates are applying for these positions as a result of previous recruiting visits.

In addition to recruiting efforts at universities, staff has also been attending career fairs around the state. With help from the Division of Human Resources, we have developed new recruiting materials and have placed them and job announcements on various web sites.

Last year we hired seven new conservation officers for eight openings.

It takes over a year to hire and train a new officer. The selection process starts with a job announcement in early fall. In November, candidates participate in an assessment center which includes two interviews, an oral presentation, and a writing assignment.

Top candidates are asked to return in early January after a background check to participate in a psychological exam, a polygraph exam, a physical exam, a job specific behavioral profile, and a fitness battery. Upon successful completion of each of these, they are offered a job and asked to return in early March to begin their initial training.



## Training

Training starts in Boise/Meridian with a two-week orientation and an introduction to firearms and arrest techniques. Prior to beginning the 10-week POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) the new CO must complete nearly 80 hours of pre-POST CD training. The 10-week POST Basic Patrol Academy is required by all of Idaho's peace officers, including city police, county sheriff's deputies and state police.

After POST graduation in June, the trainees are sent to the regions to regroup before they return to Meridian in August for a three-day basic conservation enforcement orientation. Their initial training is formally complete the following November after they have successfully completed a 10-week Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP) with three separate Field Training Officers (FTO).

Ongoing training continues throughout their careers. Annually, officers must complete a minimum of 32 hours of firearms, arrest techniques, policy review, search & seizure and other law enforcement training.

Front row, left to right: Andrew Sorensen, John McLain, Julie Bryant, Joey Ishida, Matt O'Connell (Instructor).

Back row: Eric Crawford (instructor), Scott Putnam, Steven Roberts, Brian Flatter, Tom Burkhart (instructor), Roger Westfall (instructor).



**Special  
Investigative Unit  
(SIU)  
Clay Cummins,  
Assistant Chief,  
Enforcement  
Bureau, SIU  
Supervisor**

## Overview

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) continues to be an important and strong component of Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) overall enforcement program. The main purpose of this program is to target commercial and habitual poachers. The value of wildlife parts and hunts (especially "trophies") continues to soar. Many folks out there poach wildlife for profit.

The Special Investigative Unit continues to work statewide and now closely with the new Regional Investigator (RI) positions. The Regional Investigator program has enhanced the exchange of information between the regions and SIU. Last fall 2005, SIU worked jointly with several RIs with impressive results. SIU also collaborates with investigators from other states and Canadian provinces since many of the poachers we deal with are operating in multiple locales.

In general, our investigations consistently and frequently deal with unlicensed guides, closed season killing, thrill-killing, waste, exceeding the bag limits, license fraud, and illegal big game tag use. These investigations also reveal gross violations of fish and game law and repeated yearly poaching. Most poaching is done under the auspices of legitimate business and hunting practices. Most poachers we encounter have a

license and tag. Many of SIU's investigations are time-intensive and long-term (sometimes years invested).

In 2005/2006, SIU worked and closed a variety of cases. They included five cases of unlicensed outfitters or guides, one case of license fraud, and SIU assisted RIs with an unlicensed taxidermy shop, an illegal grizzly bear, a party hunting group, and a father/son killer team (see regions 1, 3 reports). These cases involved bear, elk, deer, waterfowl, upland birds, protected birds, etc.

Several cases highlight the mobility of poachers and the need to share information and cooperate with other states and provinces in our investigations. Operation Pocket Plunder started out as an investigation (2004) into big game poaching in Lewis county, ID. Idaho investigators received information from Detective Pudwill of



*Operation Pocket Plunder.*



Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Bill and Chris Witt of Battleground, WA. were charging a large fee (\$5,000+) to be a part of a 'hunt club' on ground they had leased in Lewis county, Idaho. Idaho investigators made contact with the Witts which led to a three-state (Oregon, Washington, Idaho) and one province (British Columbia) investigation. In July 2004, the Witts were arrested and charged for unlicensed guiding for salmon in British Columbia by the Conservation Officer Service. Equipment seized and forfeited, along with a \$24,000 fine after a guilty plea, included: a 22' jet boat, a Ford crew cab pickup, and fishing tackle appraised at \$100,000 (Canadian).

Idaho investigators discovered big game and bird violations going back to 1998 in Idaho.

The Witts and six other defendants (WA, OR, ID) were charged in Idaho with two felonies and multiple misdemeanor charges (30) stemming from violations that occurred from 2002-2004. Violations included over-limit of elk, transfer of

big game tags, trophy deer killed with invalid tags, closed season turkey and pheasant, and no license, among others. In September of 2005, Christian Witt plead guilty to five misdemeanors and one felony conspiracy and was assessed \$29,150 in fines and civil penalties. He also lost his hunting privileges for life and forfeited all mounts and a rifle. Bill Witt was fined \$9,750 with a five-year hunting license suspension. The six other defendants plead guilty and received revocations of one to three years.

Another multi-state poaching case (Operation Bear Necessities) involved an illegal guide from Washington (Gary Sanders) offering bear hunts in Alaska and deer hunts in Idaho. In the fall of 2005, a cooperative investigation with Alaska led to four arrests in Alaska (Gary Sanders, Bob Novak, Robert Disadori, J. Shields) with multiple charges of unlicensed guiding for big game, over-limit of bear, and wanton waste. These subjects pleaded guilty to nine charges which resulted in the following: \$71,000 fines assessed

with \$45,000 suspended; 960 days jail assessed, with 840 days suspended; \$10,125 restitution assessed; hunting privileges revoked for a total of 15 years; value of forfeited items to include three scoped hunting rifles, one handgun, binoculars, rangefinders, portable radios, and fly rod with assessed value \$6,800; three unlawfully taken black bears were forfeited.

Violations discovered in Idaho against Sanders and Novak have not been charged yet in two counties in Idaho. Sanders was already on probation in Idaho after a previous illegal outfitting conviction in Shoshone county, Idaho.

In another case (Smoked Apple) 20 charges have been filed against Don Fothergill for unlicensed guiding of bear hunts. The investigation revealed that he guided 21 clients in 2005 for bear hunts in Kootenai county. He charged approximately \$500 a piece for "self-guided" hunts. The state alleges there were elements that made these hunts guided where an outfitter and guides license would be required. He had no outfitter or guides license. Disposition is pending.



## Wildlife Forensic Program

There are not enough TV nights to watch all the crime solving shows available. But everyone should make the time to watch and listen to Karen Rudolph, IDFG's Wildlife Forensic Biologist as she solves today's wildlife crimes using state of the art forensic science.

Not unlike Monday or Thursday night TV, Karen has the capability to place the poacher at the scene of crime. In the last year, she completed 22 wildlife cases with 192 pieces of evidence. These cases primarily involve matching DNA from a wildlife crime scene to evidence collected by officers. In one specific case, within 27 hours Karen matched DNA samples from a wasted deer found in the woods to the antlers seized in a search warrant at the suspect's home.

The IDFG wildlife forensic program can match to the individual animal for white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose and black bear. We can match species and gender on most other wildlife found in Idaho. The lab can determine the species of an animal from protein-based electrophoresis, and gender and individual matching using DNA technology.

In addition to DNA forensic work, our version of CSI-Wildlife has the capability to determine cause of death, time of death, and limited ballistic forensics.

With the popularity of crime solving TV shows viewed most every night, Karen has developed an outreach program inviting 5th through 8th graders to participate in solving a mock wildlife

crime. Donning lab coats and hats, students participate as real IDFG officers to conduct an initial crime scene investigation, gather evidence, and interview witnesses and suspects. Collected evidence is then taken to the remote lab where Karen and the students perform all the tests needed to solve this would be "who-done it" mystery.

To maintain her standards and remain court ready and accredited, Karen semi-annually participates in blind proficiency tests with other wildlife crime labs.



Karen Rudolph



## Citizen's Against Poaching (CAP) Program

### Clay Cummins, CAP Coordinator

#### Overview

CAP (Citizens Against Poaching) was started in December 1980. The organization was established by concerned private citizens in partnership with Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

CAP is a non-profit corporation with interested sportsmen from around the state serving as regional directors, president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer. There are seven regional directors:

- Region 1: Bill Lewis
- Region 2: Kent Henderson
- Region 3: Fred Christensen (President)
- Region 4: Don Zuck
- Region 5: Dexter Pitman

Region 6: Frank Lawyer  
Region 7: Tom Coates  
Secretary/Treasurer: Jerry Conley

The CAP board establishes policies and solicits funds for the program. Major fund sources used to date are:

- Controlled hunt fee check-offs. This has been the major revenue source over the years. Persons who apply for a controlled hunt submit a fee of \$6.25 with the application. The money is utilized for processing the hunt permits. \$1.00 of that fee may be designated by the hunter to CAP.
- License sales commission on licenses sold at department offices. A \$1.75 vendor fee charged on each license sold. When the department is the vendor, the fee is put into a special fund and may be given to CAP or used for special operations. Our legislature established this program and essentially guarantees the solvency of the reward fund. IDFG puts \$25,000 into the fund from this source each year.

- Donations from concerned individuals, solicited by the CAP corporation.
- Court ordered reimbursements.

Our CAP program has been very successful. Reward amounts are: \$100 - birds, fish, and general violations; \$250 - most big game animals; \$500 - trophy species such as sheep, goat, grizzly, moose, caribou, and sturgeon.

With approval from the CAP board, we can increase these amounts in special circumstances.

#### Statewide Highlights:

CAP continues to be a successful part of IDFG's law enforcement program. From 1986 - 2005, \$369,000 in rewards (averaging \$18,500/year) have been paid out for information that has lead to poacher arrests. In those cases where excellent and timely information was received,



2006 CAP board members from left to right: Jerry Conley, Frank Lawyer, Bill Lewis, Kent Henderson, Dexter Pitman, Tom Coates, Don Zuck, Fred Christenson.



At the June 2006 CAP meeting, Clay Cummins awarded Fred Christensen (CAP President) a plaque in appreciation for his long support of wildlife law enforcement and for his part in getting legislation passed to increase the statute of limitations to five years for license fraud and certain big game offenses.



our conservation officers have been extremely successful in catching poachers (approximately 85% success). For example in 2005, 96 citations were issued from 52 assigned CAP cases. In 2005, an additional 498 violation calls to the CAP hotline were referred to officers. Since 1986, the courts have assessed approximately \$668,000 in fines, and \$547,000 in civil penalties from citizen generated cases.

In 2001, CAP purchased the first traveling trailer to advertise the CAP message. IDFG got this trailer outfitted and in action for its first show in July of 2001 (State bow hunters meet in Stanley). To date it has been in demand and a huge success statewide. A common comment from the public is "are all these animals poached?" My standard response has been "this represents just a drop in the bucket of critters poached every year". Sportsmen have been shocked and outraged.

Because of the first trailer's success and to improve availability around the state, CAP purchased two more trailers. All three are now in action and operated locally out of the IDFG Regional Offices for events such as: county fairs, hunter education clinics, school events, hunting and fishing clinics, and law enforcement events.



Sportsmen continue to show their support for Citizen's Against Poaching. The large number of calls and the fact that approximately two-thirds of the controlled hunt applicants designate \$1.00 to CAP shows that citizens care about Idaho's wildlife.

It's proven that with the public's help our officers are much more effective in fighting wildlife crime.

A recent CAP call shows how two true sportsmen responded and worked with IDFG officer Scott Wright and the courts to help convict two poachers.

Clay,

*Two guys called me after seeing one guy kill two large bucks. I confronted the shooter and the guy who transferred his deer tag and neither would admit to the violation. To make a long story short, one of the witnesses drove 30 miles one way and the other one drove 70 miles one way to come to court at both pre-trial and trial. These guys had to miss two days of work and with gas prices the way they are, this was not insignificant. One of the witnesses brought his*

*wife and new born baby to trial and they were in the halls of the courthouse for nine hours. We convicted the transfer of tag guy and kept the deer in the attached picture. The statements from the witnesses were the pivotal part of this case and we would have had to dismiss the charges without their willingness to miss work and drive to American Falls on two different occasions. Neither of these guys complained, but they were very appreciative of the extra money to help offset their expense in this case. This is the only time I have asked CAP to enhance the reward money on a case, but I think it was well deserved in this instance.*

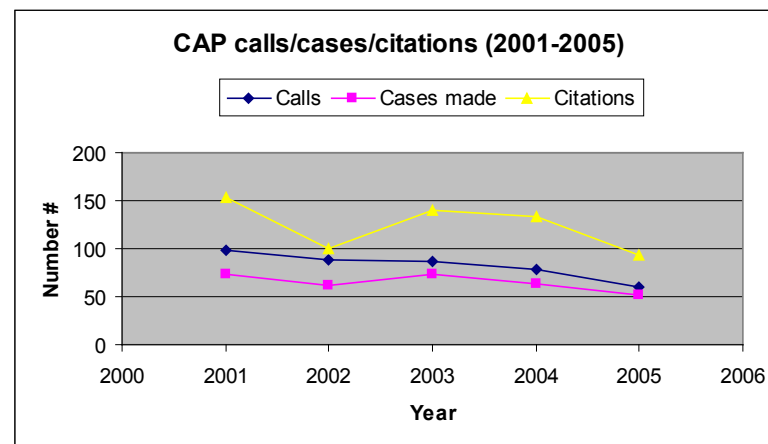
Scott Wright

**To report wildlife violations in Idaho,  
call the Citizens Against Poaching  
Hotline:**

**1-800-632-5999.**

***"There is no honor in poaching"***

*-Maine's "Operation Game Thief"*



## PANHANDLE REGION – R1

Regional Conservation Officer Craig Walker

2885 Kathleen Ave., Coeur d'Alene ID 83815  
Phone: (208) 769-1414

The Panhandle Region of Idaho is a geographically unique mix of very large lakes, dense forest, and fine cutthroat rivers. Big Game Unit 4, in the Coeur d'Alene River drainage, has one of the highest elk densities in the state. I have the privilege of leading the Panhandle Region enforcement officers. As the Regional Conservation Officer, I supervise two District Conservation Officers; Ed Jochum, in the Sandpoint District, and Mark Rhodes, in the Coeur d'Alene District. Each supervises five or six Senior Conservation Officers.



This year we upgraded a Conservation Officer position and created a Regional Investigator position. Dave Overman, who was our St. Maries SCO, took over that position. Dave got immediate results in his new job by reopening a five year-old tip on an illegal grizzly bear. Not only did he find the grizzly, but this case caused a chain reaction which lead to several cases including illegal taxidermy and unlawfully taken animals. Most of these cases are still being run through the legal system at this time.

In response to complaints from numerous landowners in the Harrison Flats area, SCO Jerry Hugo designed an action plan to address trespass and spotlighting concerns. The area is completely private and supports an elk herd of 60 to 80 animals, in addition to many white-tailed deer. Jerry and other COs concentrated many hours of spotlight patrol effort during the fall, and worked the area heavily during the elk season. Jerry also enlisted the help of Citizens Against Poaching (CAP) to produce large, reflective signs to post in the area.

The result of this project has been overwhelming support from local area landowners, even though only a couple of citations were issued in response to the concentrated patrols, trespass problems dropped off dramatically and the occurrence of night-hunting nearly disappeared.

The Panhandle Region employs two specialty officers. SCO Brian Johnson serves as our Grizzly Bear Enforcement and Education officer. He is funded in part by IDFG and in part by federal dollars for threatened and endangered species. He also receives funding from private interests such as timber companies, and by Idaho Dept. of Lands and USFS grants. Brian spends much of his time working in the Selkirk Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone monitoring road closures, and teaching school groups and private organizations about grizzly bears and their recovery. This spring, Brian enlisted the help of several volunteers to mail a short video tape to hundreds of black bear hunters who hunt in the grizzly recovery zone. The tape is designed to teach proper identification of grizzly bears for those hunting black bears in overlapping habitats.



*Pictured from left to right; SCO Jerry Hugo, Landowners Chris and Gayla Muench, and Wildlife Technician Jason Story. Photo courtesy of Carrie Hugo.*



SCO Tom Whalen is our Bull Trout officer. Tom's position in Sandpoint is funded by Avista Corp. as part of habitat loss mitigation due to power producing dams. Tom spends most of his time on the Pend Oreille Lake system, which contains some of the best bull trout populations in the state. He works with anglers and local organizations extensively, enforcing laws specifically designed to protect this threatened species, promoting proper identification, and raising community awareness of bull trout. As part of this community awareness project, Tom routinely has a large, award winning, bull trout float in the local parade.

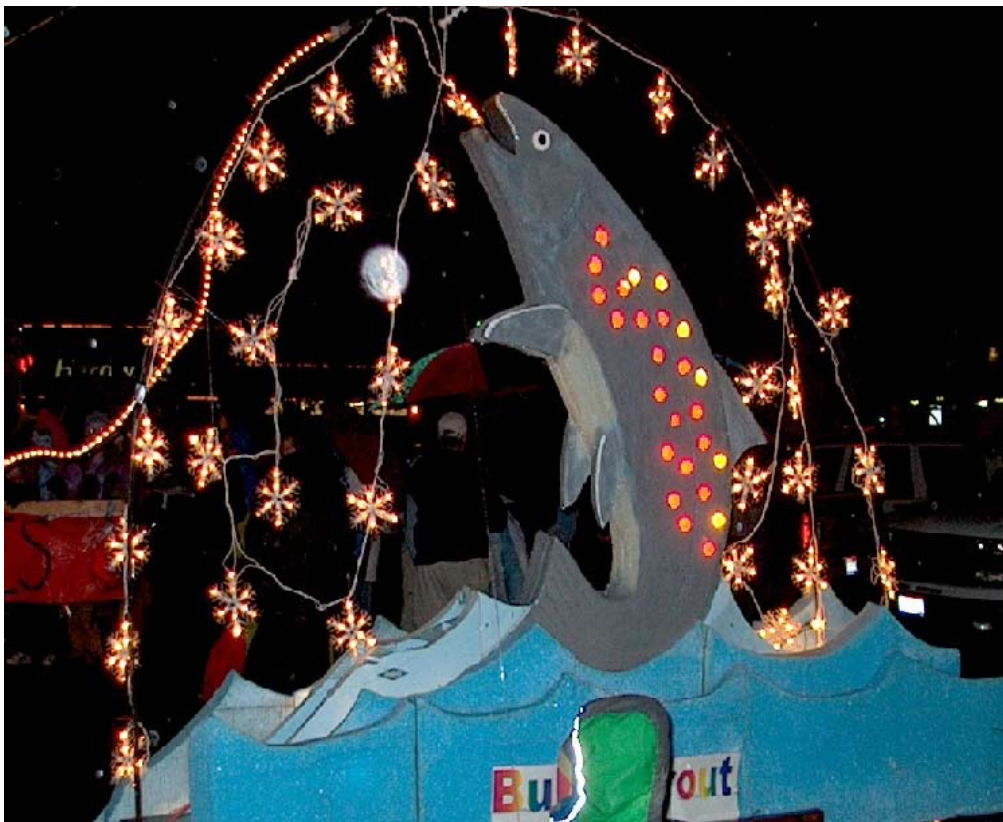
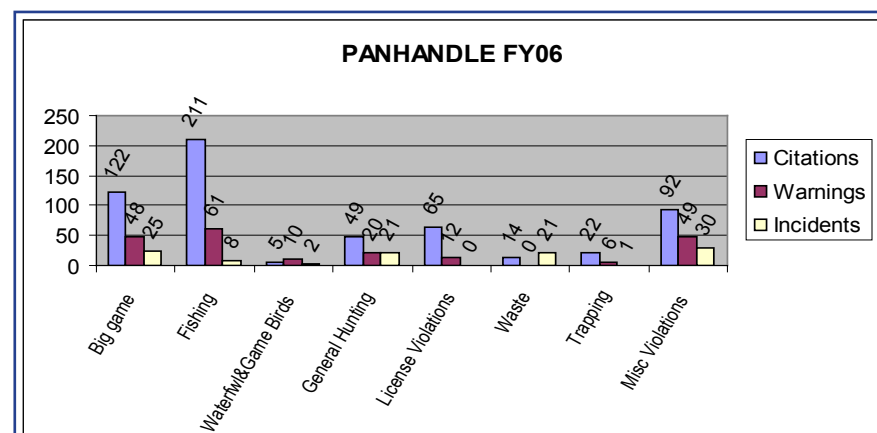


Photo courtesy Tom Whalen.



## CLEARWATER REGION – R2

Regional Conservation Officer Dave Cadwallader

Two District Conservation Officers, ten Senior Conservation Officers, two Conservation Officers and one Regional Investigator.

3316 16th Street, Lewiston, ID 83501

Phone: 208-799-5010

The Clearwater Region stretches from Hells Canyon on the west bordering Oregon and Washington to the Bitterroot Divide on the east bordering Montana. The northern reach of the region is the watershed divide separating the Clearwater River Basin from the St. Joe river system. The southern boundary includes several

100 miles of the Main Salmon River including the Little Salmon River south of Riggins. This region is a major backcountry region including the northern portion of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, the Gospel Hump Wilderness, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, the Hells Canyon - Seven Devils National Recreational Area, and the Mallard-Larkins Primitive Area. The second most prominent geographical feature is the abundance of water including the entire Clearwater River Basin, the Snake River in Hells Canyon, the main Salmon River and the 60 mile-long Dworshak Reservoir on the North Fork Clearwater River.

### REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ **BARRY CUMMINGS** selected as statewide officer of the year.
- ♦ **LARRY WILLMOTT** selected as regional officer of the year.
- ♦ **OFFICERS** are leaders in the participation of several first-time youth hunts mentoring well over 200 kids hunting for their first deer, turkey or pheasant.
- ♦ **OFFICERS** investigated a heavy felony case-load this year with a concentration on catching individual poachers who are already convicted felons, now being charged as felons in possession of a firearm along with the wildlife violations. Also included felony wildlife violations with several defendants serving 30 to 90 days in jail plus some lifetime license revocations.



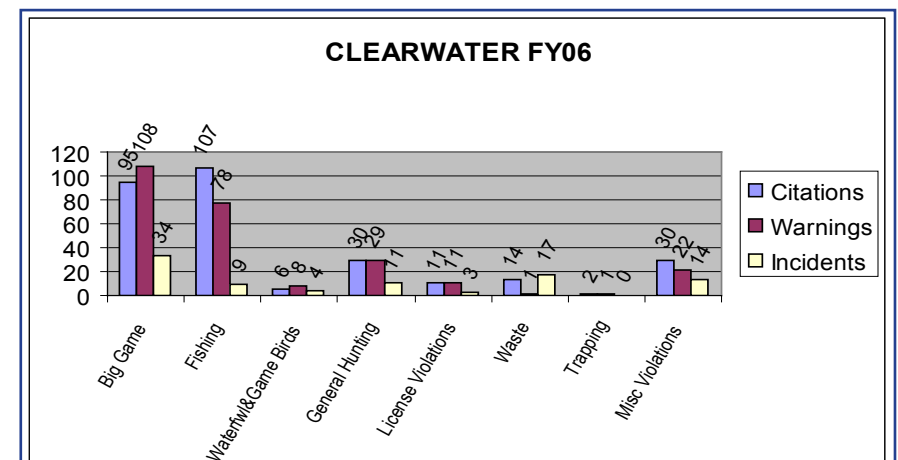
*Larry Willmott with felony moose antlers.*



- ♦ **MAJOR HIGHWAY CHECK STATIONS** - The region conducted three major check stations on the main north/south Hwy. 95 near Riggins, one each during steelhead, chinook salmon and big game hunting seasons. Check stations are great educational and enforcement tools enabling us to contact 1,000 hunters and anglers transporting their harvest home.
- ♦ **REGIONAL OFFICERS** authored or were the subject of over 50 front-page and major “good news” articles in newspapers across the region.
- ♦ **RECEIVED FUNDING** through grants to build a patrol cabin in the extreme northern part of the region in the Floodwood State Forest.
- ♦ **RECEIVED** as a gift a newly constructed five-bay storage shed and 3.5 acres in Kamiah as part of an exchange of an easement at the old Kamiah Holding Ponds facility. As part of the exchange, enforcement staff facilitated and brokered an agreement resulting in long-term, free access to a local private fishing pond in Kamiah.



*Bailey Cullen, mentored by George Fischer, with her first turkey on her first hunt.*



## SOUTHWEST REGION

### – R3

Regional Conservation Officer Jeff Wolfe

3101 S. Powerline Road, Nampa ID 83686  
Phone: 208-465-8465.

The sub-regional office in McCall is located at 555 Deinhard Lane, McCall ID 83638; phone: 208-634-8137

Twenty-one regional officers (RCO, DCOs, COs and RI) provide IDFG services to 617,053 residents or 43% of the state's total population. A total of 19.8% of the state's conservation officer work force is assigned to the region and each officer is responsible for providing services to 29,383 residents.

Geographically the region runs from the Salmon River breaks to the north of McCall, east into the Frank Church and Sawtooth Wilderness Areas, west to Hells Canyon then south into the high desert resources of the Bruneau and Owyhee River drainages.



## REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

FY06 will be remembered as one of those "years to remember" for wildlife law enforcement.

- We initiated the regional investigator program;
- Officer Marshall Haynes received the "Enforcement Employee of the Year Award";
- We mentored thousands of kids in hunting and fishing;
- Put a major crimp in illegal party hunting traditions;
- Crumbled a major reptile capture, import and sale operation;
- Apprehended thousands of bad guys violating the resource in general.
- and helped the Boise Police bag a couple of major marijuana grow operators who were originally investigated for illegal outfitting and sturgeon fishing violations.

SCO Marshall Haynes was recognized as one of the deserving officers to receive the "2005 Enforcement Employee of the Year Award." Officer Haynes has put forth 110% effort throughout his career and has gone the extra mile by serving as a field training officer, firearms instructor, and backcountry patrol specialist. Marshall has a genuine interest in always doing the right thing for wildlife and Idaho's residents by being aggressive towards wildlife crime, mentoring young hunters and new recruit conservation officers with the right stuff. We are very proud and appreciative that Marshall hangs his hat in the Southwest Region.



*Officer Marshall Haynes receiving his award.*



## Keynote Law Enforcement Activities

Back in September, DCO Charlie Justus, our resident reptile expert, initiated an investigation into the illegal capture, sale, and importation of reptiles (primarily lizards and snakes) involving multiple western states. We served four search warrants in three cities seizing about 80 snakes from rubber boas, rosie boas, king snakes, milk snakes, night snakes, eastern and western rattle snakes, sidewinders, copperheads, and cobras. Ultimately six suspects were found in violation of 113 felonies and 456 misdemeanors. Prosecutions and sentencing are still in progress.

In December, SCO Brian Marek caught wind of an illegal outfitter offering sturgeon fishing and duck hunting trips on the Snake River. Two officers initiated an investigation and caught two suspects in the act. An arrest was made on the river and two subsequent search warrants were served on the suspects' homes in Boise. IDFG officers discovered a large marijuana grow operation and summoned the Boise Police. Police detectives commented that the grow "was really a good one" and were most appreciative of our help. The suspects were charged with outfitting and guiding without licenses, taking sturgeon out of the water and using barbed hooks. Felonies for the grow operations and possession are still pending.

The old tradition of party-hunting for one group of resident and non-resident hunters was brought to an abrupt end this fall. SCO Rusty Anderson gathered information and initiated an investigation into this group's party-hunting ethic. On a cool morning before dawn, IDFG officers swarmed down on the renegade camp

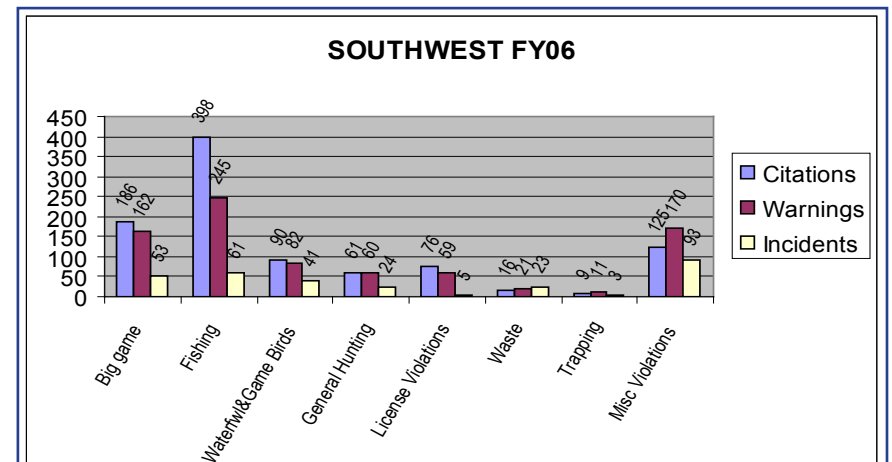
to put an end to their illegal practices of killing multiple animals without tags or licenses. As the day warmed up, three non-resident renegade hunters were placed under arrest and booked into the Adams County jail. Ten suspects were charged with a total of over 30 felony and misdemeanor violations consisting of over-bag limits of deer and elk, killing and hunting big game without licenses or tags and party-hunting.

The Adams County magistrate didn't take too kindly to this group's good ole boy party-hunting ethics. Some of the group got to tell poaching stories in jail, some lost hunting privileges for life and many also lost four-wheelers, guns and camping equipment. Some charges are still pending on several of the suspects.

Regional officers caught a lot of bad guys, but they also went the extra mile to mentor more good guys - our youth - in the future. All regional officers were involved with or coordinated youth recruiting and mentoring events/outings this

year. Some events of mention are as follows: five medium to large enforcement-sponsored fishing clinics attended by a total of 817 kids; four individual officer-initiated mentoring fishing outings attended by a total of five kids; 23 individual officer-initiated mentoring hunting outings (17 bird/turkey hunts and four deer hunts) attended by a total of 66 kids; two youth shooting skills clinics attended by a total of 2,008 kids.

Officer John Nagel also became involved with a really neat idea to get fishing licenses into the hands of needy youth. The Owyhee County Deputies Association has provided a \$300 fund to purchase fishing licenses for youth that officers encounter fishing without a license. If the officer feels the kid is needy and could use some financial help, he/she is asked to fill out one of their department business cards with the name of the youth and to send the youngster to one of the following cooperating license vendors: Matteson's in Homedale, Snake River Mart in Marsing or Dan's Ferry Service in Walter's Ferry.



## MAGIC VALLEY REGION – R4

Regional Conservation Officer Gary Hompland

Two District Conservation Officers 11 Senior Conservation Officers and one Regional Investigator

319 South 417 East, Jerome 83338  
Phone: 208-324-4350

The Magic Valley region is bisected by the Snake River canyon and is centrally located along Idaho's border with Utah and Nevada. Major tributaries of the Snake include the Big and Little Wood Rivers, South Fork Boise River, Raft River, Jarbidge, and Bruneau Rivers.

Sensitive game fish species include Snake River White sturgeon, Yellowstone cutthroat and bull trout. The Magic Valley region is home to the blue ribbon trout stream, Silver Creek, made famous by Ernest Hemingway. Numerous



*Regional Conservation Officer Gary Hompland.*

irrigation reservoirs and mountain lakes support the region's lake angling and are regularly stocked with hatchery trout. Additionally, Salmon Falls Creek and Oakley Reservoirs support fishable populations of walleye.

The mountainous northern and southern reaches of the region are dominated by sagebrush steppe habitats with pockets of aspen, lodge pole pine and Douglas fir. The central part of the region; the Snake River plain is made up of agriculture interspersed by sagebrush and deeply cut canyons.

habitats in the Bennett Mountains and South Hills support trophy mule deer, elk and sage grouse. Wildlife research in the region includes sage grouse, mule deer fawn mortality, and re-introductions of mountain quail and sharp-tailed grouse.

### REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

As part of the Department's strategic plan to monitor and enforce off-road rules, an action plan was implemented utilizing undercover officers in big game unit 49; a site of chronic complaints about abuse of ORV rules. Several hunters were contacted and warned but detection of non-compliance in the area was less of a problem than initially thought.

Commercialization of wildlife continues to be an ever-pressing issue. Undercover officers purchased an unlawfully possessed mountain lion. A subsequent search warrant has lead investigators to outfitters and hunters from out of state. Felony charges are pending with the prosecuting attorney's office.

During the early part of the year, Magic Valley officers were busy with a special project to identify fraudulent resident hunting and fishing license purchases. Approximately 1,100 resident

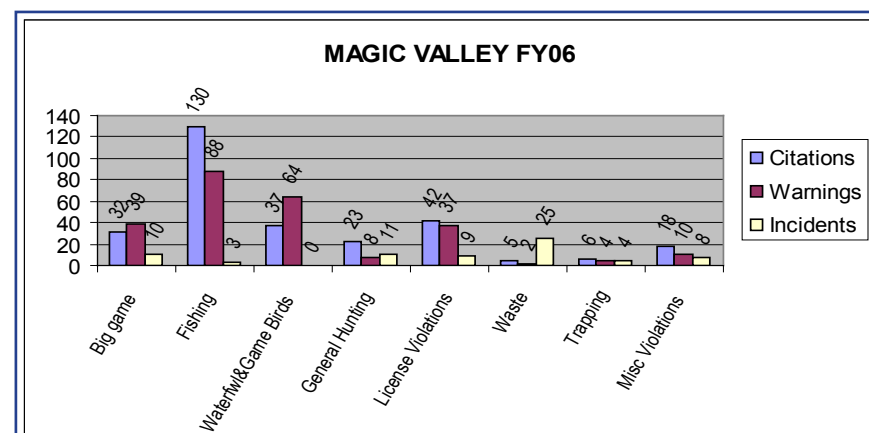




license applications from the Magic Valley sold between January and July were identified using computer queries of the license data base as potential fraudulent resident license purchases. Search criteria such as driver's license issue date were followed up with the Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho Voter Registration, and Idaho Tax Commission to verify residency. We estimated our violation detection rate was 0.5% (125 violations). Based on approximately 27,500 resident licenses sold during the first six months of 2005 in the Magic Valley region, we estimated a loss of nonresident license revenue during this period of approximately \$11,884.25.

As part of the Mule Deer Initiative, one of the regional action plans focused on monitoring and protection of wintering mule deer. Many people enjoy viewing and photographing large mule deer bucks. In 2005, due to extremely high snow depths, deer migrated to an area largely unavailable for viewing. In 2005, officers spent 150 hours and contacted 62 people, with one violation for waste of a deer.

Reservoir angling was another action plan for 2005. Magic Valley officers conducted 16 boat angler patrols on five reservoirs using covert and overt techniques. Nearly 160 hours of enforcement effort yielded over 400 license contacts and 17 violations.



## SOUTHEAST REGION – R5

Regional Conservation Officer Tom Lucia

1345 Barton Road, Pocatello 83204  
Phone: 208-232-4703

The Southeast Region lies in the very southeast corner of the state consisting of Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Power, Oneida, and parts of Bonneville, Butte, and Blaine Counties. This land mass is serviced by two District Conservation Officers, nine Senior Conservation Officers, one Regional Investigator, and one Regional Conservation Officer. Approximately 10,500 square miles in this region is home to a resident population of approximately 160,000 people. In addition to our resident population, over two million people live within 200 miles of our southern border, many of whom use Idaho as their recreational get-away. On average, each conservation officer has an area of responsibility of over 1,000 square miles.



### REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the thousands of compliance checks, calls for service, and hundreds of violations detected, there were some very notable cases made.

One very high profile case involved a subject killing a moose on his way home from a fishing trip in Oneida County. The landowner observed the poacher in his field and a confrontation ensued. The suspect ended up choking the landowner and left him unconscious in the field. Unfortunately, the landowner did not get a license plate number but did have a fairly good description of the vehicle. After a month-long search for the vehicle proved unsuccessful, we asked for help through the news media. Within hours of the newspaper article being released, we received information on the suspect. A search warrant was issued and the suspect was arrested for that moose along with another moose found at his residence when the warrant was served. He was also charged with felony assault, trespass, and indecent exposure. This was a very important and high profile case and our officers' dedication and relentless pursuit of this investigation has elevated the Department's standing in Southeast Idaho, and especially in Malad.

Another case that made front page news in the Idaho State Journal was the Inkom deer shooting. In the early morning hours of March 25, a poacher drove to a field just south of the city of Pocatello and emptied his .17 caliber handgun into a herd of deer, then drove away. At daylight the landowner found four dead deer in his field and notified our department immediately. There was almost no evidence left at the scene and we asked the media for help. This incident outraged the local community and soon there was over \$5,500 pledged by individuals and local merchants as a reward. Through the efforts of the Southeast Idaho Mule Deer Foundation, this incident continued to receive media attention and we eventually received very promising information. An interview was conducted and the suspect confessed. He was charged with four counts of killing deer during closed season and four counts of wasteful destruction of deer. On June 13, he was convicted on all eight charges and received a substantial sentence including a lifetime revocation of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges.

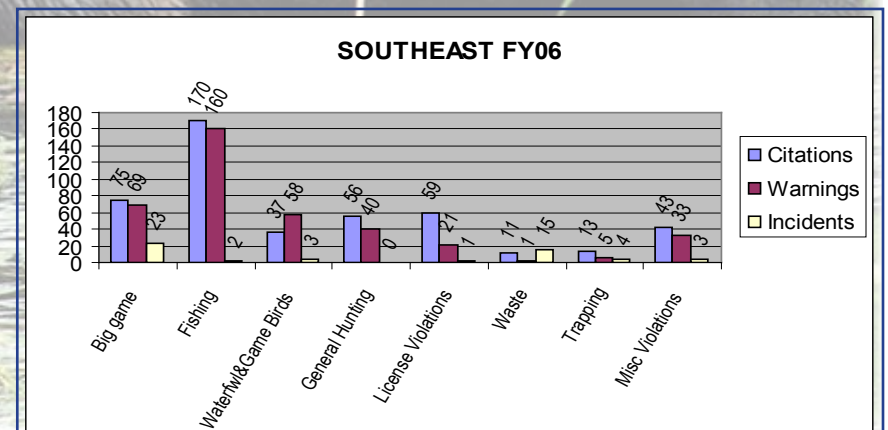


Another case of a senseless deer poaching incident happened early this spring when an individual was observed shooting at deer in the Blackrock area. A subject was identified and questioned about the incident. He steadfastly denied shooting at deer and was subsequently released. A search of the area was conducted and a deer carcass was located with a bullet of the same caliber of gun that the suspect was carrying. A search warrant was issued and served on the subject's home and business for the firearm. During the service of the search warrant, evidence of numerous other F&G violations were discovered and fourteen charges were filed. His pre-trial is set for July 18.

These are just three very high profile cases that took a considerable amount of time, effort, and perseverance, by our officers to solve. The enforcement effort in this region continues to maintain the highest degree of professionalism and reflects our officers' dedication and commitment to Idaho's wildlife resources.



photo courtesy Steve Kraemer





## UPPER SNAKE REGION – R6

Regional Conservation Officer John Hanson

Two District Conservation Officers, ten Senior Conservation Officers and one Regional Investigator

4279 Commerce Circle, Idaho Falls 83401  
Phone: 208-525-7290

The Upper Snake Region is comprised of seven counties located in eastern Idaho. Nestled next to Yellowstone and Teton National Parks, it shares borders with Montana and Wyoming. From the Lost River Range on the west to the South Fork Snake River in the east, the Henrys Fork in Island Park and the expanse of the Snake River plain, the geography is as diverse as the wildlife. The Upper Snake Region is blessed with an abundance of species that include mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, antelope, black bear, mountain lion, moose, big horn sheep, mountain goat, sage and sharp-tailed grouse, cutthroat

trout, rainbows and browns. The area is also home to several threatened and endangered species, including trumpeter swans, grizzly bears and wolves.

### REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Mule Deer Initiative (MDI) has been the primary focus for the Region. Enforcement and management efforts were intensified in MDI related areas. Several Resource Action Plans were implemented by officers that targeted specific MDI issues, including saturation patrols on mule deer winter ranges, illegal harvest of trophy bucks and illegal OHV use. Joint OHV patrols with the Targhee National Forest to address unlawful OHV use has been an emphasis during the fall hunting seasons for several years.

Education and enforcement of forest travel plan regulations as well as IDFG rules have benefited through these cooperative efforts.

Enforcement emphasis on the Henrys Fork River, South Fork of the Snake River and Henrys Lake are major priorities during the fishing season. Enforcement continues to play a vital role in the Department's effort to preserve remaining Yellowstone cutthroat trout populations.

Officers continued to be active during the past year with several high profile cases, including the conviction of Glen Berry, of Berry Wild Game Calls & Big Bull Productions, for possession of taking an elk unlawfully without a license and tag. Intelligence gathering provided information that resulted in the conviction of two felony

moose counts on two individuals from Bellevue. The poaching of a 252 B&C mule deer from the Ashton area was concluded with a conviction this past year.



Officer OHV patrol.





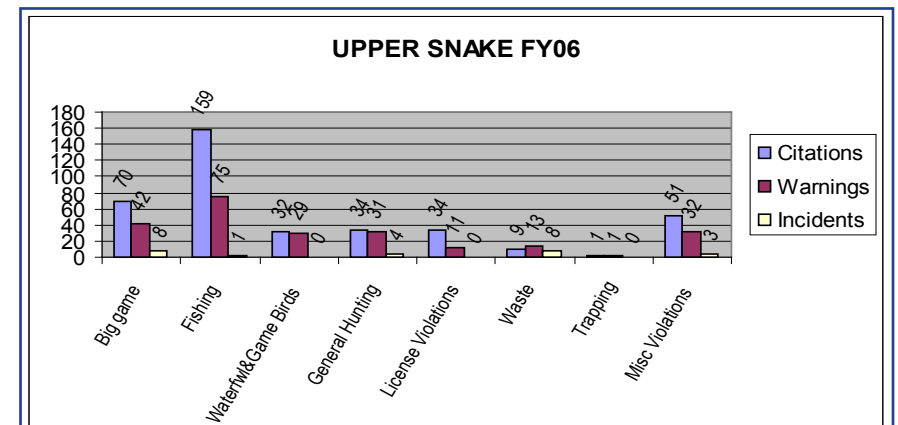
The domestic cervid industry has grown, so has the Department's response to related issues. The Region presently has six active domestic elk shooter-bull facilities that vary in size from 300-400 acres to some in excess of 5,000 acres. As a result, ingress and egress of wildlife and domestic stock are ongoing dilemmas.



Ashton Officer Charlie Anderson.



District Conservation Officer Mark Carson checking licenses.



## SALMON REGION – R7

Paul Sommerfeld, Regional Conservation Officer

99 Hwy. 93 N, Salmon 83467

Phone: 208-756-2271

The Salmon Region is a rural, sparsely populated area comprised mainly of roadless backcountry in south central Idaho. The enforcement staff includes a Regional Conservation Officer, Paul Sommerfeld, two District Conservation Officers, Justin Williams and Chris Wright, one Regional Investigator, and eight Senior Conservation Officers.



### REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

All Salmon Region officers completed individual enforcement action plans that focused on objectives identified in The Compass. We have also updated our annual strategic plans for the Challis and Salmon enforcement districts to focus on regional work priorities for each month of the year. As part of our plan to emphasize backcountry enforcement in the Salmon region, officers have upgraded Department-owned patrol cabins along the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in the Frank Church Wilderness Area. The Cougar Ranch

cabin was stained and a new floor installed. The Mormon Ranch cabin was cleaned, painted, new bunk beds built, and a new cook stove and propane lighting installed. Construction of the



*Loon Creek cabin.*

*New firearm training range.*







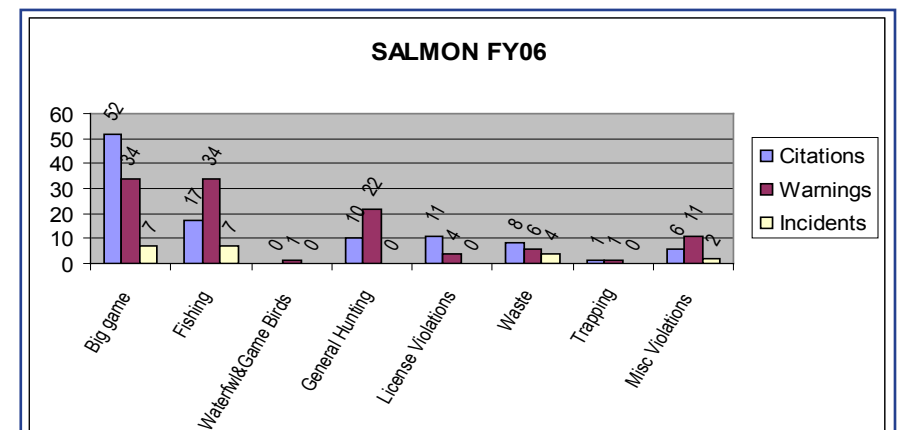
District Conservation Officer Chris Wright; Regional Conservation Officer; Paul Sommerfeld, DCO Justin Williams.

Salmon screen crew assisted the Salmon Police Department and Lemhi County to complete a new firearm training range this past fall.

All Salmon Region officers wrote press releases to help educate and inform the public on opportunities, issues, and regulations in the region. We continued to make waste of game violations an enforcement priority. Radio announcements and press releases were used to draw attention to this problem. In addition, officers also used the “Case of the Month” radio spot to highlight successfully prosecuted wildlife violations and to encourage local area residents to report unlawful activity.

new Loon Creek cabin was also completed. Officers spent over 230 man-days on backcountry patrol last year.

We have partnered with local enforcement agencies by cross-training and working closely together. Salmon Region officers along with the



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